

16. *Action of Steel upon Phthisis.* By RICHARD PAYNE COTTON, M.D., Physician to the Hospital for Consumption, Brompton.—The following observations upon the action of steel, were made upon twenty-five in-patients of the Consumption Hospital. As in all my preceding experiments, I studiously avoided any selection of cases, and excluded only those in which the disease was obviously too far advanced to render any kind of treatment available, and those in which there existed some complication which would tend to negative the result.

Of the twenty-five patients ten were males and fifteen females. Six were in the first, six in the second, and thirteen in the third stage of the disease. Ten were under the age of 20, and the rest were between 20 and 40 years of age.

I selected the old *vinum ferri* as being the most simple of the many forms of iron, as well as one which is seldom objected to, and is rarely found to disagree. At the commencement I prescribed two drachms twice a-day, each dose being gradually increased to half an ounce, and in some few instances to an ounce. The treatment was continued for periods varying, according to the different cases, from four to thirteen weeks. In two or three of the female patients, the steel seemed to cause slight headache, which, however, gradually disappeared when the dose was lessened or temporarily discontinued. During its use, the patients' appetites were usually very good, and there was not the slightest indication of increased liability either to hæmoptysis or any other active symptom of the disease.

Of the twenty-five patients, thirteen *greatly* improved; three *slightly* improved; and nine derived *no benefit*; of these, three died in the Hospital.

In thirteen of the cases cod-liver oil was occasionally but not regularly taken in conjunction with the steel; but in the remainder, no other medicine was administered except some simple linctus for the cough. Fourteen patients increased in weight—some of them very considerably; eight lost weight; and three remained unchanged in weight. Nine of the fourteen cases in which the weight increased were of those who had taken cod-liver oil. One of these patients, in the second stage of the disease, illustrated the remarkable but not very rare phenomenon, of increasing in weight, whilst both the local and many of the general symptoms of consumption were steadily advancing.

Of the thirteen patients *greatly* improved, several left the Hospital with their general health restored, and their active symptoms dissipated. Four were especially remarkable for the improvement they exhibited, being able, in spite of the unmistakable existence of pulmonary cavities, to resume their several pursuits on leaving the Hospital.

Seven of the thirteen improved cases were under the age of twenty—a large proportion, if we consider the respective ages of the patients.

Perhaps I may here remark, that although I had not hitherto compared and tabulated the cases I have treated with steel wine, I have long been in the habit of prescribing this medicine, in conjunction with cod-liver oil, to phthisical and strumous patients, especially to children and young persons, and have always placed great faith in its efficacy. I have, indeed, always considered it amongst the most useful remedies in this class of diseases; and in this homage to the *vinum ferri* very many of my medical brethren will doubtlessly join. That the remedy fairly deserves to be thus estimated, is, I think, sufficiently shown by the experiments I have detailed.

After I shall have recorded similar observations upon a few other substances which are now undergoing probation in my Hospital wards, I hope to give a general summary of their comparative results. And, although I am quite willing to admit that any conclusion at which I may arrive in the course of these experiments must necessarily be imperfect, and at most but an approximation to truth—considering that, in order to reach the actual truth, many insuperable difficulties present themselves, such as want of uniformity in the cases, circumstances, and stages of the various patients, as well as in the season of the year, the diet, and a multitude of other circumstances—it will, I think, be nevertheless conceded, that the trial to which I have subjected the different remedies is not altogether unproductive, and that on the present occasion steel wine comes before us very favourably as a medical agent in the treatment of phthisis.

In order, however, to assimilate this paper with those which have preceded it, I would record the following conclusions:—

1. Steel wine is a very useful auxiliary in the treatment of a considerable number of consumptive patients.

2. It seldom disagrees, but tends rather to increase the appetite, and improve digestion.

3. It is especially valuable in the cases of children and young persons.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Dec. 14, 1861.

17. *External Application of Iodine to Remove Plastic Exudations in Pleurisy.*—M. DELIOUX uses, for the removal of plastic exudations following pleurisy, frictions with an ointment composed of iodine, two parts; iodide of potassium, eight parts; and lard, thirty parts. The skin being made perfectly clean, friction with this ointment must be made over the affected part for five minutes every morning and evening; a layer of cotton-wadding is then applied, and covered by oiled silk, the whole being secured by a bandage round the body. The application produces more or less cutaneous irritation; and, where this is severe, the remedy must be discontinued—but for as short a time as possible. M. Delieux has employed this treatment with success in a score of cases of intrapleural exudation, some dependent on acute pleurisy, others being instances of a chronic exudative pleurisy. The duration of the treatment has varied from fifteen days to two months: in the acute cases, from fifteen to twenty days have generally been sufficient for the removal of the false membranes. The iodine thus applied is absorbed; M. Delieux and M. Castain found it in the urine.—*Brit. Med. Journ.*, Jan. 4, 1862, from *Bull. Génér. de Thérap.*, 30 Sept. 1861.

18. *Sulphuric Acid Mixture in Diarrhœa.*—DR. ANDREW CLARK highly extols the efficacy of sulphuric acid in diarrhœa. He claims to have cured by it, given in the manner prescribed below, 74 per cent. of cases of diarrhœa within 48 hours.

When the stools are scanty and frequent, the administration of the acid is preceded by a dose of castor oil. When they are abundant and watery, the acid is begun at once: R.—Acid. sulph. aromat. ℥xx; tinct. camph. comp. ℥j; ætheris chlorici ℥x; spirit. menthæ pip. ℥ss; syrupi rhœados ℥j; decoct. hæmatos. ad ℥j.<sup>1</sup> To be given every four, five, or six hours, according to the urgency of the diarrhœa. The object of the aromatics in the formula is the correction of the fecal fermentation which is one of the chief conditions in the production of diarrhœa. In some cases the second or third dose succeeds in checking the disease, and then the patient is troubled for a day or two with pinching pains in various parts of the bowels. These are best relieved by a small dose of castor oil with an aromatic. The acid is rarely successful in advanced phthisical or dysenteric diarrhœa, but it is so in the early stages of these complaints.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Jan. 4, 1862.

19. *Podophyllin in Constipation.*—DR. ANDREW CLARK considers no single remedy to be so free from the objections which attach to most laxatives as podophyllin. It is not a specific for constipation, and it is not in all cases free from some of the objections attached to other remedies. But in the great majority of cases of simple constipation, it fulfils the conditions required of a safe and effectual remedy, by operating slowly, easily, and after the manner of Nature.

Podophyllin<sup>2</sup> is an amorphous resinoid powder, obtained by evaporation from an alcoholic solution of the root of the May apple (*Podophyllum Peltatum*.) In America it is used in ten-grain doses as a cathartic, of similar characters to the resin of jalap; but for use as a natural laxative, the maximum dose is one grain. If more than this is given, it produces griping and loose stools. For most persons a grain is too large a dose. It is better to begin with half-grain doses made into a pill with extract of taraxacum, which must be taken during breakfast, that it may operate next morning after that meal. For the first few days, the

<sup>1</sup> Or, if the mixture is to be kept, some aromatic water.

<sup>2</sup> Made by Davenport, of Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury.